

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1 (currently amended): Apparatus for decorating an edible food having a determinable instantaneous yield point without substantially deforming said edible food even when said edible food is soft, moist frosting or other comparably soft food, said apparatus comprising, in combination:

a hand held container defining an interior holding a liquid decorating substance for decorating an edible food; and

an elongated, elastic, highly flexible nib of integral construction formed of open cell foam material of high hydrophilicity connected to said hand held container, said nib having a porous distal end, a porous nib shaft side wall and a nib interior defining voids in fluid flow communication with the interior of said container and with the pores of said porous distal end and said porous nib shaft side wall for receiving the liquid decorating substance from the container interior and conveying said liquid decorating substance to said porous distal end and said porous nib shaft side wall through said nib interior whereby high levels of said liquid decorating substance are present at the outer surface of said porous distal end and said porous nib shaft side wall for application to said edible food due to contact between said porous distal end or said porous nib shaft side wall and said edible food, said nib readily laterally flexing when in contact with said edible food prior to the force

applied by said nib to said edible food substantially exceeding the instantaneous yield point of said edible food at the location thereon engaged by said nib when pressure is exerted on said edible food by said nib to substantially prevent deformation of said edible food even when said edible food is soft, moist frosting or other comparably soft food and the pressure exerted is slight during application of said liquid decorating substance to said edible food by said apparatus, flexing of said nib operable to bring the porous nib shaft side wall into engagement with said edible food and substantially conform to a surface of said edible food whereby said liquid decorating substance passes through said porous nib shaft side wall and is applied to said edible food by said porous nib shaft side wall without the force applied by said porous nib shaft to the surface of said edible food substantially exceeding the instantaneous yield point of said edible food at the location thereon engaged by said porous nib shaft sidewall when said nib is pulled along the surface of said edible food, said nib flexing laterally and deflecting to weather vane responsive to changes in the direction of said nib as it is pulled and dragged along the surface of said edible food in engagement therewith, said nib utilizing capillary action to carry liquid decorating substance from the nib interior to the outer surface of said porous nib shaft side wall and porous distal end and to replace liquid decorating substance transferred

from the nib to said edible food and to maintain a high fluid level at said porous distal end and said porous nib shaft side wall, and said nib responsive to withdrawal of said nib from contact with said edible food to return to its undeflected condition.

2 (canceled)

3 (previously amended): The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said open cell foam material is acetalized polyvinyl alcohol.

4 (canceled)

5 (previously amended): The apparatus according to Claim 3 wherein interstitial cells of the acetalized polyvinyl alcohol open cell foam material accommodate said liquid decorating substance.

6 (original): The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said nib is configured with a concave taper, decreasing in cross-section in the direction of the porous distal end.

7 (canceled)

8 (previously amended): The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said open cell foam material has a porosity of from about 88% to about 92%.

9 (previously amended): The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the average pore size is from about 60 microns to about 300 microns.

10 (previously amended): The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said open cell foam material has a water absorption rate (percentage of mass) of from about 1,020% to about 1,300%.

11 (previously amended): The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said open cell foam material has a pore size distribution of from about 30 microns to about 150-400 microns.

Claims 12 - 16 (canceled)